WHO HAVE VIOLATED COMPROMISES.

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# SPEECH

OF

# HON. JOHN HICKMAN,

OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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Delivered in the House of Representatives, December 12, 1859.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.
BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.
Stereotyped by Blanchard's Patent, issued February 22, 1859.
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# SPEECH

OF

# HON. JOHN HICKMAN,

OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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Delivered in the House of Representatives, Thursday, December 13, 1849.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.
BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.
Stereotyped by Blanchard's Patent, issued February 22, 1850.
1850.

# Speech of Mr. Hickman.

The *Constitution* newspaper, the organ of Mr. Buchanan's Administration, having charged upon the Anti-Lecompton Democracy a bargain with the Republicans to effect an organization of the House—

Mr. HICKMAN said:

Mr. Clerk, with regard to the attack made by the President's newspaper on myself and others, I have but a word to say. If made by the President himself, he knows it to be false. If made by any other person, he does not know it to be true; for, sir, the reason why I occupy the position here to-day which I do occupy, is because I could not be purchased. [Applause from the Republican benches and from the galleries.] This reading me out of the Democratic party has been faithfully persevered in for the last four years, by many abler and stronger than the gentleman from Missouri, [Mr. NOELL,] and still they have not yet got rid of me, and it will take them perhaps four years longer of persevering effort, if I shall choose to remain so long in their good company.

My "treason," to which very frequent reference has been made here, not merely during the present session, but during former ones, has a history connected with it—a history with which the gentleman from Missouri ought to be acquainted. Sir, it dates back four years, when, in this Hall, on the grievous charge being made—a charge which pervaded the country, and which was believed by the country—that fraud and force and all manner of crimes had so far invaded the Territory of Kansas that they had prostrated thoroughly the people, I chose to introduce a resolution to investigate that charge. That was the time when my treason commenced, for I then took the stand against an undivided Democracy; and, sir, I charge on that undivided Democracy, from whom I do dissent to-day—not, however, because I have failed to be a Democrat—a persevering effort, both in this Hall and in the other wing of the Capitol, to stifle that investigation and to suppress the proof of the fraud. Then, sir, I was read from the Democratic party; and yet, after the committee, which I was, to some extent, instrumental in raising, (and this is the first time I have ever referred to it,) had made their report to Congress, no man in the country was sufficiently reckless to deny that the charge which had been preferred was fully and completely proved. Then, sir, I was denounced as a renegade and a traitor, and for what? What was the body of my offence? Because I chose to differ from the Democracy, believing that the charge ought to be investigated, and that, if fraud existed, it ought to be revealed. And have they ever washed their hands of it to this day? No, sir; to no greater extent than silence may have done it.

Well, sir, I returned home to my people with all the brand of treason which that body of men could place upon my forehead; and Mr. Buchanan, the present President of the United States, endorsed my Democracy in the face of that accusation which had gone up against me, and insisted on

my renomination, as he believed that it would be valuable to his canvass. Mr. Buchanan did not denounce me.

Now, a word in respect to that canvass, for the mere purpose of instituting a brief inquiry as to where the charge of "treason" may properly rest, and as to who is the renegade. The State of Pennsylvania was in very imminent peril at that election; and Mr. Buchanan knew that the election in that State rested upon the answer to a single inquiry, which was this: Was it safe to trust him with the management of Kansas affairs? Why, sir, it can be proved by a thousand living witnesses, if necessary, that during that summer, this man, who now fills the Executive chair, made it his business to pledge men, everywhere in the North, that if he should succeed in his election, as he knew the Free-State element in that Territory to be the stronger, Kansas should come into the Union as a free and not as a slave State. That fact has been frequently stated. It has never been denied in Pennsylvania; and by means of the pledges that he thus gave, did he succeed in carrying that State at the November election. As soon, however, as he reached the city of Washington, it was discovered that the mind of the President had undergone a very sudden change—not that his judgment was convinced, because I think it can be very clearly shown that he never alleged that his mind had undergone any change up to that time; but he made the fear that three or four Southern States would secede from the Union a pretext for urging upon Congress the adoption of the fraudulent Lecompton Constitution. Then, we begged leave to differ from him in his policy. We were again denounced as traitors, and again read out of the Democratic party. Well, sir, the President's hand was raised against us, and everything that Executive power and patronage could do was done for the purpose of destroying us in our respective districts. We are now back here again, to rebuke again the treachery of this wicked and reckless and leprous Administration; and if that is treason, the other side have got to make the most of it.

I have said all that I propose to say upon that point at this time. I may avail myself of another opportunity to go into it at greater length.

Well, sir, the charge of treason that has been made is not sufficiently powerful to humiliate and disgrace us, and we find this newspaper adding to it an allegation of corruption. If there is any man in this body of men who knows of any contract or agreement that I have entered into with anybody, for any purpose, let him proclaim it now, or forever hereafter hold his peace. I have never done so anywhere, at any time; and I say now, that if the election of my friend, Col. Forney—and I take great pleasure in calling him my friend—could only be effected by such an arrangement—that if I could only procure his election as Clerk of this House by entering into a covenant with any man here, upon the Republican side of the House—I would refuse to do it. As Mr. Buchanan could not purchase me, so can I not be purchased by others. [Applause and hisses.] I have already been offered more than I am worth, and I refused to sell myself at that. [Laughter and applause.] Why, sir, this is all false pretence. I know where the trouble is, and the country knows where it is. I have ventured to express opinions against giving to Slavery an unlimited charter to travel where it pleases. That is the body of my offence; all the rest is false pretence. And I desire to say now, that if Democracy consists in supporting all the claims which the Southern country may make upon us, I shall very soon cease to be a Democrat. I have been in this House long enough to learn many things which I never could have learned at home, and I think it has perfected my education upon one point: I have learned that a man may support every measure of a Democratic Administration, and yet, if he shall vote against a single interest of Slavery, he ceases *ipso facto* to be a Democrat; but if he vote against every measure of the Administration, and will sustain the interests of Slavery, he is *ipso facto* a good Democrat. I put that as God's naked truth before this House and before the country, and I intend to stand upon it as a solemn conviction.

Now, sir, I wish to say a word to the Administration side of the House; and I intend, in what I say upon this occasion, and upon every other, to treat every man here as I would be treated myself, respectfully; but I shall express my opinions, if I choose to do so, all of them, fearlessly. There *is* a contest between the North and the South, and the admission might just as well be made now as at any future time. There *is*

a state of feeling existing between the North and the South which cannot be removed; it is as deep laid as the foundations of mountains, and, sir, it pervades every section like an atmosphere. If you want to know why the North have feelings upon this subject, I will tell you. They have become satisfied that there is but one thing which will satisfy our Southern brethren; and that is, the right to carry Slavery everywhere, to plant it everywhere, to sustain it everywhere, against the united wishes, as it is against the united interests, of the North.

Mr. MOORE, of Alabama. Will the gentleman permit me to ask him a question?

Mr. HICKMAN. I interrupt nobody, and I do not wish to be interrupted myself, for I do not want to get into a controversy.

This determination to extend Slavery is Southern interest, and the Representatives of the South are compelled to ask as much. I do not complain of them for so doing; but when *our* interests are directly adverse to theirs, and lie in another direction, why should we be denounced for pursuing our interests as they pursue theirs?

More than this. The North has grievous charges to prefer against the South, and they are charges which they will have answered. That is my conviction; and if the expression of these sentiments stamps me with the title of Abolitionist, so be it; I will wear it as well as I can. Yes, sir, they have charges to make against the South, which they will have answered. They charge them with the violation of covenants, compacts, and compromises. That is what they charge them with, and it is well that they should know it. It is useless to cry peace, sir, when there is no peace. Why, sir, when the compromises of the Constitution were entered into by our fathers, it has been said that, if the same spirit had existed which exists now, those compromises never could have been made. I see the truth of the remark; I feel the truth of the remark, sir; for when those compromises were entered into, they were entered into under the solemn conviction that the power of Slavery from that day was not to increase, but to be diminished. If they had had the feelings or if they had pursued the policy which our Southern friends are now intent upon, those compromises never could have been entered into. What did they get? What did our Southern friends get by those compromises? They got the Slavery representation. They got the foundation for a fugitive slave law. They got exemption from export duties. They got three very large advantages. What did the North get, or what did the interests of Freedom get? Why, sir, they got the implied pledge, that, after the year 1808, the importation of Africans, or the foreign slave trade, should cease.

Now, sir, the South boast to-day that they are in full possession of all the benefits of all the compromises of the Constitution; that they have the Slavery representation; and, if I understood a gentleman who spoke a few days ago, he declared that they have here, by force of the three-fifths representation, twenty members upon this floor. They boast, sir, that they have the fugitive slave law, and that the North does not abide by its provisions. They are certainly exempt from duty upon exports; and where is the North, with her share of the compromises of the Constitution? Why, sir, we hear it boldly avowed, not here, but it will come here before spring, it will come before the flowers come, that they do not intend that the foreign slave trade shall be closed. They intend to open the traffic. Yes, sir, they have opened the traffic; they make bold to say so, and Southern courts refuse to punish offenders. I say, then, the North charges upon the South that they have swept away from the North the benefits of the compromises of the Constitution, when the South are in the full enjoyment of all the advantages which could possibly result to them.

When you come to the compromise of 1820; when, in order to get Missouri into the Union as a slave State, they gave to us of the North the solemn pledge and entered into bonds that Slavery should never exist north of the southern line of that State; after having got Missouri in, and reaped all the advantage which they could reap from that compromise, the South came here—not the North—the South came here, almost a united South, to say that the benefit which the North received from the compromise of 1820 should be swept away; and, sir, Southern breath swept it away; and we had, in consequence, the struggle in Kansas as to whether Slavery should or should not go into territory from which it had been prohibited.

But, sir, the North charge, further, that in the compromise of 1832—the great compromise of the great compromiser—Northern trade was paralyzed, and Northern industry destroyed. And then, sir, last, and not by any means least, we have the compromises of 1850 and 1854, which I choose to join together, as they constitute but one single compact. After we bought—yes, sir, after we bought California into the Union, giving to the South monstrous prerogatives, which I will not undertake now to enumerate, they made us the solemn guaranty that if we would adopt the principle of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, to leave the whole question of Slavery to the final determination of the people of the Territory, and exclude all agitation of the Slavery question from Congress, they would abide by it. Now, sir, where are we? Who is there that represents that Southern sentiment of 1850 and 1854, upon this floor? Who is there that represents it? Is there any Southern member who represents it? It is likely that there is. If there be, however, he has maintained a most respectful silence up to this moment. No, sir; the Southern sentiment destroys all the benefits which the North were to reap from the compromise of 1850 and 1854. I will not undertake to say what the motive of the gentleman was who introduced the Kansas-Nebraska bill, but I think that no man ought to have doubted what the effect of that bill would be. The South undoubtedly expected that it would conduce to the interest of Slavery, and the effort was strenuously made, I think, in Kansas, to force that benefit from the main provision of the bill. But from the moment that it failed to plant Slavery in Kansas, it has been repudiated; and if I understand the position which the South occupy to-day, it is that they will have nothing to do with this thing of squatter sovereignty. They bitterly despise and denounce it.

Now, here is the first, the second, the third, the fourth, and the fifth compromise which the North has entered into with the South upon this all-absorbing subject of Slavery; and the North charge upon the South, that, in every single instance of compromise, they have violated its sanctity, after having received the benefit, or tried to receive the benefit, arising from their side of the bargain. And these charges have to be answered—not here, merely, but at other times and other places. They will have to be answered next year, and I assume now the position that the South have got to satisfactorily explain these things, or they have got to give up the Federal offices. [Applause and cries of "Good" upon the Republican side.] Now, the South have rights, guarantied under the Constitution; but the South have not all the rights. The North have a few. Individually, I would not withhold from the South, or from any portion of the South, the least, as I would not the greatest right, guarantied to her either by fundamental law or statute. I would treat her as I would treat a younger sister; I would give her more than she is entitled to, rather than less, because she is the weaker party. I would bestow bounties, even, upon her; but when she comes here, or anywhere else, and demands, as a right, what is not her right, and seeks to wrest from the North what she is not entitled to, I would deny her. That is my position, and those are my principles at the present time; for if I understand the politics of the country, if I have not been blinded for the last four years, there are no politics in the United States now but "nigger." The whole politics of the country are involved in the negro question. Shall Slavery travel into the Territories, or shall it not? that is the question. There is no other question, and there will be no other question in the Presidential contest of 1860; and if I am constrained to choose between the party which insists that Slavery shall travel everywhere, against right, and that party which says it shall not go anywhere, even when it has a right, I cannot help it. That is all. I stand upon the principle of the Kansas-Nebraska bill. I believe it is sufficient for us. It is anyhow the bond between the North and the South, and I will try it a little further, and I am with the men who are for that principle. I know how it will result. It will result exactly where the Republicans desire it should end; it will end in the exclusion of Slavery from all the Territories of the United States. If there is any man who is committed to the principles of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, who does not answer that question in that way when it is propounded to him, all I have to say is, that he is either wilfully blind or slightly dishonest.

Sir, I have never uttered a political sentiment in my life, that I can remember,

that I would not utter here, in the hearing of the South—not one. I have always stood by the Democratic party, when I believed it to be right. I adhere to the principles of the Democratic party; and I have always opposed that party when I believed it to be wrong, and I intend to do so forever. There shall not be any misunderstanding between any gentlemen upon the Democratic side of the House and myself. I feel perfectly certain that the party has been bankrupted by this Administration of James Buchanan. I know it. I know it; for whenever the Democratic party can no longer control Northern masses, then that party is bankrupt; and that is the condition of that party to-day. There is not a Northern State, not one, as there is scarcely a Northern county, that can be carried upon the doctrine upon which Mr. Buchanan this day bases his Administration. I want the party to put itself exactly right at Charleston; and, if it will not put itself right, I want it to put itself plainly wrong. I do not want the people, either of the North or of the South, to be deceived by any platform which can be interpreted in one way in one section and in another way in another section. If it is the sentiment of the Democratic party that Slavery shall travel with the column of our advancing civilization, I say, put it so before the people, express it plainly, and receive the Northern verdict upon it.

I should have said something about Union meetings at the North, but my friend from New York [Mr. HASKIN] has rendered that entirely unnecessary. I say this, which will cover everything I should have said at greater length: that there is no sentiment now in the North which can plant itself upon Southern policy, as I understand it, and live; for the reason that it would be governed by selfish considerations. And if this condition of things existing between the North and South shall lead to a dissolution of this Union, which no one would deplore more than I should; all I can say is, the North, under those circumstances, will endeavor to take care of themselves. I have never seen a Northern man, in latter times, that was much scared. I know many men have been alarmed, in times past, at the cries of dissolution; but I have never yet seen a Northern man who expressed any alarm as to the results of a dissolution of the Union. I will state what my conviction is on the subject. I do not know, however, that I thoroughly understand what is meant by a dissolution of the Union. If it means a dividing line of sentiment between the North and South, and virtual non-intercourse, why we have reached that dissolution already; for Northern men cannot now travel in the South; and, as I understand it, any postmaster in any village of the South, where the receipts of the office would not amount to five dollars, can, if a letter bearing my frank goes into his hands, open it, examine it, and burn it, on the pretext that it is incendiary. Sir, we have reached that dividing line between the North and the South. But, if dissolution means that there is to be a division of territory, by Mason and Dixon's line, or by any other line, I say "no;" that will never be. I express my opinion—and that opinion may go before the country, whether false or true—when I say "no;" the North will never tolerate a division of the territory. [Applause from the Republican benches.]

Mr. GARTRELL. I should like to know how you are to prevent it.

Mr. HICKMAN. I will tell you how it will be prevented. I am neither a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but I express my belief that there is as much true courage in the North, though it may not be known by the name of chivalry, [sensation,] as there is in the South. I do not use the word contemptuously, for I admire true chivalry everywhere. There is as much true courage at the North as there is at the South. I always believed it, and, therefore, I will express it; and I believe, sir, that with all the appliances of art to assist, eighteen millions of men reared to industry, with habits of the right kind, will always be able to cope successfully, if it need be, with eight millions of men without these auxiliaries. [Great sensation, some applause from the Republican benches and the galleries, and hisses in other parts of the Hall.]

Mr. LEAKE. Will the gentleman permit me to propound to him a respectful interrogatory?

Mr. HICKMAN. I am up now, answering an interrogatory. I am answering why I am not a rascal. [Laughter and applause.] That is the main interrogatory.

I am sorry, sir, to trouble the House with these remarks. I entered this Hall

on Monday with the firm determination that I would not be dragged into a speech. I found that it was impossible to maintain that determination, that attacks were to be made incessantly, continuously; attacks, too, that could not be passed over in silence. I have answered them. There is no charge resting upon me of corruption, either here or at home. If there had been any there, it would have been exposed long before this. I have passed between raking fires there, as I have here. My colleague [Mr. FLORENCE] smiles, for he knows something about it. If the charge could have been made, it would have been made and proven; and, therefore, I do not want any charge to be made against me here by any gentleman on this floor, much less by a contemptible, hoodwinked newspaper, at the other end of the avenue, which has not as much circulation as a decent Northern village journal, when they have discovered nothing to found a charge upon.